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The Orphan: A Cinderella Story from Greece (review)

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appeal. The animal voices add further interest, as the pets observe the emotions of the humans around them, particularly William, before the people are even aware of their own feelings. While this will obviously draw in fans of animal tales, it will also attract fans of realism willing to stretch. Final illustrations not seen. HM

Manna, Anthony L. *The Orphan: A Cinderella Story from Greece;* by Anthony L. Manna and Soula Mitakidou; illus. by Giselle Potter. Schwartz & Wade, 2011 [40p]
ISBN 978-0-375-86691-3 $17.99
Reviewed from galleys R 5-8 yrs

"A child becomes an orphan when she loses her mother," goes the Greek saying, and that's precisely what happens to the unnamed heroine in this Greek version of the Cinderella tale. The tale has the familiar elements of stepmother and stepsisters and a handsome prince, but it's Mother Nature who confers the fancy outfits and it's a church service at which the orphan sports them and wins the heart of the prince. When she returns to the church the next week, the wily prince spreads honey and wax on the church's threshold and traps the fleeing orphan's shoe, resulting in the classic fit-the-slipper-to-the-maiden drama. The piquant differences from the Perrault and Grimm Cinderella versions (the orphan also distracts the villagers with gold coins while she escapes and rides a white horse created from a cloud) and the friendly, conversational voice will seem fresh and engaging to young audiences who have been over-saturated with Disney-fied tales. Potter's signature folk art-ish watercolor illustrations are a perfect fit for the folkloric Greek setting and characters, and her black-haired heroine is an appropriately Mediterranean version. Potter is particularly effective at evoking emotion with her images: the spread depicting the orphan receiving her gifts simply radiates joy. This would be a useful for a lesson in comparative literature, as a readaloud, and for storytellers looking for new versions of old tales. It's unfortunate that there's no note, so it's not clear whether this is a traditional Greek version or an original tale that happens to be set in Greece. JH

Marsden, Carolyn *Starfields.* Candlewick, 2011 [224p]
Trade ed. ISBN 978-0-7636-4820-6 $15.99
E-book ed. ISBN 978-0-7636-5622-5 $15.99
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 5-7

Nine-year-old Rosalba, a Mayan girl living in a remote Mexican village, learns from Alicia, a *ladina* girl from faraway Mexico City visiting with her father and his team of environmental scientists, of an ancient Mayan prophecy that predicts the world will end in the following year, 2012. Alicia convinces Rosalba that the decline in the region's frog population (the subject of her father's research) is an indicator of the world's demise; the frog population is further affected by road construction in the region that is destroying frog habitat in the name of building an unwanted road to Rosalba's village. Interwoven with Rosalba's story are passages in the voice of a shaman boy named Xunko living in the year 600; the two narratives meet when Rosalba sees visions of the shaman and begins to follow his directives. Marsden, author of titles such as *Take Me with You* (BCCB 4/10), tackles some topics unusual for her here, particularly the story of Xunko and the violent, visual descriptions of sacrifices and rituals experienced in his time. It's not always a successful effort, though: the accessibly told story of the two girls has a very different audience than